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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

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9 February 1963

The Honorable McGeorge Bundy
Special Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mac:

Attached is a communication I received from Chairman Vinson of the House Armed Services Committee, transmitting the Honorable Frank C. Osmers' letter to him of January 31st, 1963. For your information the charges contained in Mr. Osmers' letter were made by him orally at my last meeting with Mr. Vinson's CIA Subcommittee and also when Secretary McNamara appeared before the full Armed Services Committee in late January.

I propose to meet with the Vinson CIA Subcommittee the week of February 17th and at that time discuss the content of Mr. Osmers' letter. In doing so I will use the content and the conclusions of my report to the Killian Board. It is my understanding that Dr. Killian and his Board have now reported to the President, and since their conclusions, drawn not only from my report but from their independent analysis based on a very broad study, will have a considerable bearing on the position taken by Mr. Osmers, I respectfully request that Dr. Killian's report to the President be released to me in advance of my forthcoming discussions with the Vinson Subcommittee.

Yours very truly,

*for Walter Elder, Executive Assistant
John A. McCone
Director*

Attachment

EIGHTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS

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House of Representatives
623-1104

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUITE 313, CANNON OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

February 6, 1963

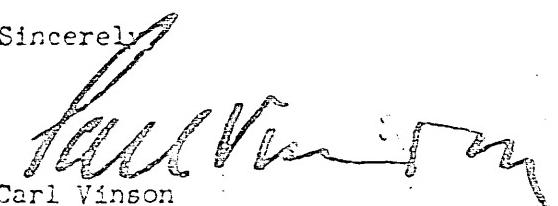
Honorable John A. McCone
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. McCone:

During recent executive hearings on our military posture, numerous questions were raised with reference to our intelligence capabilities.

The most serious questions raised were voiced by Mr. Osmers, who is also a member of our CIA Subcommittee. I am attaching the letter which I have received from Mr. Osmers, and I would appreciate it if you would digest its contents and be in a position to discuss this matter with the CIA Subcommittee on the occasion of our next meeting.

Sincerely,


Carl Vinson
Chairman

Encl.

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STAFF:
ADEL PORTER
WASHINGTON, D.C.MARGARET C. SMULLEN
ENGLEWOOD, N.J.MARGUERITE U. OSMERS
TOWACHT, N.J.

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D. C.

January 31, 1963

63-7707
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Hon. Carl Vinson, Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The October 1963 Cuban crisis came as a great shock to the American people. Compared to the intelligence failure at Pearl Harbor, our inability to confirm the existence of a Soviet offensive ballistic missile complex in Cuba until but a few days before it became operational revealed a colossal gap in our defenses.

It seems to me that only one of the three possible conclusions, which I outlined to the Armed Services Committee yesterday, can be drawn. They are:

One: That there was a treasonable conspiracy in the U. S. intelligence community to hide the Soviet Cuban offensive missile buildup from the President and the executive departments concerned.

This fantastic conclusion I simply do not believe.

Two: That the intelligence community properly reported and evaluated the buildup but, because of their failure to act at the earliest moment possible to safeguard the security of the nation, the President and his Cabinet are now engaged in a massive effort to mislead the Congress and the people about the Cuban facts.

While there is considerable evidence of political "managing of the facts" this conclusion seems highly unlikely to me.

Three: That failure to give the nation a timely warning of this deadly threat to its security clearly demonstrates that

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the gathering of information and its evaluation by our intelligence community are either grossly incompetent, or dangerously inadequate, or both.

Ruling out conclusions one and two, we are reluctantly forced to conclusion three. We must, therefore, question the ability of our entire intelligence system to meet our needs in this dangerous world.

Let us review a few of the events that had to occur without detection before the surprise discovery of offensive missiles in Cuba in mid-October of 1962. While many Americans last summer thought it would be logical that offensive missiles were being sent to Cuba, it is obvious that our intelligence community had no hint of any such top-level decision either in Moscow or Havana. This decision had to be made in January, February or March of 1962 at the latest. On-site surveys and hard roads had to be started in Cuba. We apparently had no relevant information on the training of special personnel or overland movements of equipment in Russia. The probable alteration of ships and the loading of the unusual cargoes at Russian ports went unreported. Many ships, a large number with revealing deck cargoes of crates and vehicles, passed through either the Danish or Turkish straits and then sailed many days for many thousands of miles without, it seems, even arousing our suspicion. Week after week, at small ports in Cuba, these large ships then had to unload their odd-looking vehicles, crates and weapons without our knowledge. These items then had to be stored and paraded for long periods while all of the necessary related equipment was assembled. If Cubans had been used to handle the cargo, thousands would then have had knowledge of the character of the weapons. If Cubans were barred from the ports during the buildup, as we are now told, then thousands of them would thereby know that new and secret weapons were being landed. During this time, sites had to be cleared, foundations poured, and on-site living quarters erected. Such very unusual items as oxidizer trailers, fuel trailers, missile transporters, launch stands, missile erectors, generator and compressor vans, propellant trailers, the huge missiles themselves and their warheads, and even Beagle Bomber crates, then had to be moved, unnoticed by our intelligence, relatively long distances in Cuba over roads where second-hand American cars constitute the principal normal traffic.

In my judgment, the intelligence failure here demonstrated is more serious in its future significance to the U. S. than the Cuban offensive missile installation itself. To accept the explanation that all of these activities could easily have been interpreted as part of a surface-to-air missile system installation is highly dangerous oversimplification.

I will not in this letter play the popular "Cuban missile numbers game." On that score, suffice it to say that since we don't know how many went in, it is rather academic to count those going out. Because they entered Cuba unseen by us in "large hatch" ships, they could, of course, be sent back to Cuba in the same type ship without difficulty since there is no ship inspection or blockade. Unloading at night would avoid, I assume, any U. S. aerial detection. If the Russians were deficient in camouflaging their storage and installations from the air the last time, we can certainly expect they will do a lot better next time. We are now told by Secretary McNamara, in his January 30th press release, that high altitude photo-reconnaissance is our only really reliable source of Cuban missile information. Because of this limited ability, the Russians should now know exactly how to handle the unloading and hiding of any future missile landings and installations without timely discovery.

Also, according to Secretary McNamara, thousands of human source reports on the above activities from April to September proved of no real value. Late in September, according to the Secretary, it was decided that one of these reports by a late September refugee might amount to something. On page 1 of his release, the Secretary states that up to the 29th of August last year ".....high altitude reconnaissance missions over Cuba were flown on a regular schedule, weather permitting." Also he states ".....on the 29th of August, positive identification was established of SA-2 surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites....." Despite all of the photo reconnaissance described on page 1, we read on page 2 that after the above refugee report, "Photographic coverage was thereupon proposed.....to cover this suspect MREI complex." Then on page 3 we read "After this successful flight of the 14th". All previous photo flights were unsuccessful, we must assume, in detecting any evidence at ports or elsewhere of the Russian offensive missile buildup. It is also highly disturbing to learn that despite the great threat, it was an entire week later before we instituted the necessary overflights to obtain the photographic evidence so essential in the making of the required grave decisions.

On the Secretary's behalf let it be said that in ending his January 30th release he does not say that there are no strategic weapons systems in Cuba. He merely states that ".....our coverage has not revealed the existence of strategic weapons systems in Cuba." After his prior statements about the results of what he describes as "our coverage" we had better act to improve that coverage without delay.

The respective Armed Services Committees of Congress have the very heavy responsibility to the Congress and the people for the nation's defense. You, Mr. Chairman, are the acknowledged leader of those of us in Congress who have been selected by our colleagues to perform this never-ending, non-partisan difficult chore. You requested me to make any specific recommendation which,

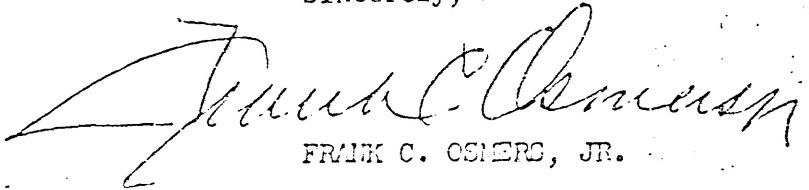
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in my opinion, might help prevent another Cuban debacle.

It is my recommendation that you request the House Armed Services CIA Subcommittee to study the entire national defense intelligence community, including not only the CIA, but all other intelligence gathering and evaluating agencies of our government. The sole purpose of this study should be to find out what can be done to prevent another Cuban near disaster. This subcommittee, on which I serve, has, up to now, dealt almost entirely with intelligence information gathered and evaluated by the CIA. It has never thoroughly studied all of the methods used to gather and evaluate all of the intelligence vital to our defense. From time to time, of course, the subcommittee has discussed both gathering and evaluation, but usually only incidental to a particular situation. In my opinion, the nation's security can only benefit by such a study as I propose. Should you decide to assign this task to the CIA Subcommittee, may I recommend that its work be highly classified.

Let us never forget that the decisions affecting the nation's security made by the President and the Congress can be no better than the information upon which they are based.

Sincerely,



Frank C. Osmers, Jr.

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